

As a current and very early customer of Dish Network I would urge the FCC to strongly support the proposed merger of EchoStar and Hughes. I have enjoyed the best level of service available from any company that I have ever received services from over the past 3+ years that I have been a Dish Network subscriber. They have consistently strived to improve their service and fix any problems that have been found in a quick and efficient manner. I am convinced that the combined company will only improve the service and offer even more than they each offer separately today.

Right now there are only two choices for receiving cable/pay TV programming, either going with whatever single hardwire cable operator is available in your area or receiving your programming via DBS. The hardwire cable operators have enjoyed monopolies in every area of the country and taken advantage of this situation at every turn by raising rates and advertising better services that have yet to materialize. Their monopolies are only growing larger; witness the recent proposed merge of Comcast and AT&T Broadband. The only way for DBS to compete against these large monopolies is to consolidate their operations and licenses to allow for more services.

There are only a limited number of satellites that can be launched to cover the US and only a limited number of licenses for transponders to send more channels to customers. This is especially an issue with the current must-carry rules that are going to be enforced starting in January 2002 for local channels. For DBS to offer local channels in more markets, more transponders are required. But, if all of a given DBS operators transponders are tied up for local service, then there is no capacity for other new channels that may become available. Right now, besides using a standard antenna there is no other way to receive HDTV content other than DBS. Both Dish Network and DirecTV are committed to HDTV and making as many channels available as possible. Can the same be said for hardwire cable? They can't even agree how HDTV content will be carried on their systems!

Both EchoStar and Hughes will benefit greatly from this merger with savings in operations and technologies. The customers of Dish Network and DirecTV will benefit even more with more channels, shared technology, and more possibilities for the future of broadband over satellites signals. I have only seen great things happen since I

joined Dish Network, and can only see greater things in the future with the new combined company.

For all of those that worry about prices going up and other anti-competitive practices, that would be completely against everything that I have seen EchoStar stand for in the last 3+ years. If Charlie Ergen says that he will not raise rates based on where you live (urban or not) then you can believe that he will stick to his word, I have yet to see him do otherwise. Besides, it does not make sense for different rates to be charged based on where you live, all of the pricing structures for DBS are based on the number of channels received, not where you are located. There is no benefit to any other kind of a pricing structure.

EchoStar and Dish Network have been the technology leaders in the DBS and cable industry, this will only become better with the addition of the Hughes and DirecTV teams! Approve this merger for a stronger competitor to cable, instead of 2 separate weaker competitors.